

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
INFO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 017259

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC (ESMAIL, SAMI) PINS, IS

SUBJECT: CAMPAIGN IN U.S. TO AID SAMI ESMAIL

1. SUMMARY. HEAD OF STEAM IS BUILDING IN U.S. OVER SAMI ESMAIL CASE. SUPPORTERS ARE SEEKING U.S. PUBLIC STATEMENT THAT ESMAIL HAS BEEN MISTREATED BY ISRAELIS AND ARE CHARGING THAT ALLEGEDLY SLOW AMERICAN CONSULAR ATTENTION TO CASE ENABLED ISRAELIS TO FORCE HIM TO SIGN CONFESSION. WE NEED ANY FURTHER DETAILS ON CHRONOLOGY OF EMBASSY'S EFFORTS AND EMBASSY'S IDEAS ON FURTHER PUBLIC HANDLING OF CASE, ESPECIALLY IN LIGHT OF FACT THAT EARLY IN CASE DEFENDANT CLAIMED TO CONSULAR OFFICER HE HAD UNDERGONE SOME PHYSICAL ABUSE AT HANDS OF ISRAELI INTERROGATORS, AND CONSULAR OFFICER INFORMED DEFENDANT'S BROTHER DECEMBER 29, WHO IS NOW BACK IN U.S., THAT EMBASSY HAD REPORTED THIS. END
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SUMMARY.

2. DETROIT ATTORNEY ABDEEN JABBARA, WHO IS PROMINENT IN ASSOCIATION OF ARAB AMERICAN UNIVERSITY GRADUATES, BASSIM ESMAIL, BROTHER OF SAMI ESMAIL, AND REPRESENTATIVE OF MIDDLE EAST RESOURCE CENTER IN WASHINGTON MET IN DEPARTMENT JANUARY 20 WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF NEA, CA, L, AND HA AND

PRESENTED AFFIDAVIT PREPARED BY BASSIM ESMail TO RECORD
CHRONOLOGY OF HIS BROTHER'S CASE. VISITORS' OBJECTIVES

WERE (A) TO INDUCE DEPARTMENT TO INFORM PRESS THAT
ISRAELI AUTHORITIES HAD IN FACT MISTREATED SAMI ESMail
AND (B) TO TRY TO DOCUMENT THEIR CONVICTION THAT AMERICAN
CONSULAR OFFICERS BY MOVING TOO SLOWLY IN THEIR HANDLING
OF CASE HAD EITHER INADVERTENTLY OR POSSIBLY THROUGH
COLLUSION WITH ISRAELI AUTHORITIES FACILITATED EXTRACTION
FROM DEFENDANT OF FORCED CONFESSION.

3. VISITORS WERE ASSURED THAT DEPARTMENT AND EMBASSY VIEW
THIS CASE VERY SERIOUSLY, WILL CONTINUE TO FOLLOW IT
EXTREMELY CLOSELY, AND WELCOME ANY AND ALL ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION. VISITORS' INSINUATION OF CONSULAR COLLUSION
WITH ISRAELI AUTHORITIES WAS FIRMLY REJECTED. VISITORS
WERE REMINDED THAT CONSULAR OFFICERS HAD ALREADY VISITED
JAMI ESMail FIVE TIMES, HAD SOUGHT TO CHECK CAREFULLY
EVERY ALLEGATION OF WHICH THEY WERE AWARE, AND HAD PUR-
SUED EVERY ACTION REQUESTED OF THEM BY DEFENDANT. AS FOR
STORIES IN MICHIGAN NEWSPAPERS CITING DEPARTMENT OFFICERS
AS SAYING SAMI HAD NOT BEEN SUBJECTED TO MISHANDLING OF
ANY KIND BY ISRAELIS, DEPTOFFS SAID THEY WOULD LOOK INTO
RECORD AND CONSIDER WHETHER SOME CORRECTION MIGHT BE IN
ORDER.

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4. FROM THIS MEETING, REVIEW OF MICHIGAN PRESS DESCRIPTION
OF CASE, PLUS FURTHER DISCUSSION OF SITUATION WITH CON-
GRESSMAN CARR JANUARY 20, IT IS CLEAR THAT THERE IS HEAD OF
STEAM BUILDING UP IN U.S. ON THIS CASE. AT THIS POINT IT
IS UNCLEAR HOW FAR SAMI ESMail'S SUPPORTERS, WHO HAVE
FORMED "NATIONAL COMMITTEE IN DEFENSE OF SAMI ESMail,"
WILL GO IN STIMULATING PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL PRESSURES.

5. AMONG COMPLAINTS ABOUT CONSULAR HANDLING OF CASE WERE
FOLLOWING POINTS; EMBASSY'S THOUGHTS ARE REQUESTED ON HOW
ALLEGATIONS SHOULD BE HANDLED.

A. CONSULAR OFFICER ALLEGEDLY AGREED DECEMBER 25 TO TELE-
PHONE BASSIM ESMail (THEN VISITING ISRAEL) LATER IN DAY,
AFTER VISITING SAMI ESMail IN DETENTION, BUT DID NOT DO SO
UNTIL DECEMBER 26.

B. CONSULAR OFFICER ALLEGEDLY WAITED ONE DAY, FROM DECEM-
BER 25 TO 26, BEFORE INFORMING ATTORNEY LANGER THAT SAMI
ESMAIL WANTED HER TO DEFEND HIM, AND THEN DID NOT TAKE
ACTION TO ENSURE LANGER GAINED PROMPT ACCESS TO DEFENDANT.
NOTE: REPORTEDLY, LANGER COULD NOT GAIN ACCESS UNTIL

DECEMBER 28, AND DEFENDANT SIGNED ENGLISH-LANGUAGE CONFESSION DECEMBER 26 AND HEBREW-LANGUAGE CONFESSION DECEMBER 27.

C. CONSULAR OFFICER DECEMBER 29 AND AGAIN JANUARY 10 ALLEGEDLY DECLINED BASSIM ESMAIL'S REQUEST THAT EMBASSY PROTEST TO ISRAELI AUTHORITIES MISTREATMENT OF DEFENDANT-- AND SOUGHT TO DISSUADE BASSIM FROM MAKING HIS OWN PROTEST-- ON GROUNDS IT WOULD ONLY MAKE SITUATION WORSE FOR DEFENDANT.

D. CONSULAR OFFICER'S DECISION TO POUCH RATHER THAN CABLE TO DEPARTMENT WRITTEN STATEMENTS PRESENTED TO HIM DECEMBER 29 BY BASSIM ESMAIL AND ATTORNEY LANGER COMPLAINING OF CONFIDENTIAL

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ISRAELI MISTREATMENT OF DEFENDANT ALLEGEDLY WAS DELIBERATE DELAY TO AVOID AROUSING DEPARTMENT'S CONCERN. NOTE: DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN GIVEN COPY OF LANGER STATEMENT BUT NEEDS TEXT OF BASSIM ESMAIL STATEMENT TELEGRAPHICALLY.

6. ISRAELI EMBASSY OFFICER TAMIR ASSERTED JANUARY 20 TO CONGRESSMAN CARR THAT AMERICAN CONSULAR OFFICER HAS RECEIVED WRITTEN STATEMENT FROM DEFENDANT TO EFFECT HE WAS NOT FORCED BY ISRAELIS TO SIGN CONFESSION. PLEASE ADVISE.

7. EMBASSY SHOULD CABLE TEXT IN ENGLISH OF BOTH CONFESSIONS.

8. FYI: IN JANUARY 17 ARTICLE ON CASE, MICHIGAN STATE NEWS STATED: "YIGAL ANTEBI, DIRECTOR OF PRESS AND INFORMATION AT THE ISRAELI CONSULATE (IN CHICAGO), SAID THAT HE DOES KNOW THAT THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN TEL AVIV HAS DENIED THAT ESMAIL HAS BEEN MISTREATED." CHRISTOPHER

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Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CAMPAIGN IN U.S. TO AID SAMI ESMail
TAGS: CASC, PINS, IS, (ESMAIL, SAMI)
To: TEL AVIV
Type: TE
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